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December 10, 2018

Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary
Office of the Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

Re: WC Docket No. 18-336 and CC Docket No. 92-105 regarding the National Suicide Hotline Improvement Act of 2018.

Dear Madam Secretary,

United Way of the Bluegrass (UWBG) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the current effort undertaken by the Federal Communications Commission to study the feasibility of designating a three-digit number to the National Suicide Hotline and to assess the effectiveness of the current National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. Located in Lexington, Kentucky, at the heart of Kentucky's Bluegrass Region, UWBG fights for greater self-sufficiency for every Central Kentuckian. In fact, UWBG and the Central Kentucky community have a Big Bold Goal, to move 20,000 families to greater self-sufficiency by 2020. To date, UWBG and its partners have already assisted over 14,000 families in achieving greater self-sufficiency.

UWBG has a nearly 100-year history of leveraging Central Kentucky's resources, and bringing them to bear on the most pressing issues facing our community. Today, we partner with 81 health and human services agencies, over 400 local businesses, over a dozen local governments, and thousands of citizens across our community to bring innovative solutions to individuals and families who are underserved, disadvantaged, and voiceless. Today's challenges require creative solutions, and UWBG is committed to bringing together the knowledge, resources, and influence to find those solutions and to implement them.

UWBG 2-1-1 is the cornerstone of our ability to affect change in Central Kentucky. As the FCC considers how to increase access to suicide prevention and intervention services, UWBG asks that 2-1-1 be considered as a vital partner. Since the FCC designation of 2-1-1 in 2000, UWBG has invested over \$3 million in its 2-1-1 infrastructure and operation. Currently, UWBG 2-1-1 receives calls, texts, emails, and web inquiries from a majority of Kentucky's 140 counties. Including all of Eastern Kentucky

(Appalachia), and Central Kentucky, as well as the greater Ashland area, and parts of Western Kentucky. Additionally, UWBG 2-1-1 handles all 2-1-1 contacts for the State of Mississippi. UWBG 2-1-1 currently fields up to 40,000 contacts per year, with the scalable capacity to handle many more. In addition to UWBG's investments over the years, the Commonwealth of Kentucky has invested hundreds of thousands of dollars, and private foundations who see the value in the system have invested over half of a million dollars in 2-1-1's success. These critical investments position us to be key partners in the success of an improved mental health and crisis response system.

UWBG is concerned that an additional three-digit code may counteract the simplicity of a single point of access for community help. Here in Kentucky, we know that the communities that we serve prefer a single point of access for individuals in crisis, or who face immediate needs. UWBG asks that Federal resources be directed toward a single point of access for individuals in crisis. We, therefore, urge the FCC to consider a partnership between the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline and United Way's 2-1-1 services. We believe in the power of partnership to address gaps and will be a valuable partner in the fight against suicide. UWBG recognizes that suicide prevention is a matter of life and death, and is prepared to make modifications to its infrastructure that take the severity of this issue in to account in partnership with the FCC.

You can learn more about UWBG's work at UWBG.org and UWBG.211counts.org and can reach my office for additional questions or discussion at 859-967-1921. Thank you for your time in addressing this important issue and for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bill Farmer". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Bill Farmer

President and CEO